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ABSTRACT

Teaching college writing students to edit the autobiographical writing of others has many advantages. Autobiographical materials, such as diaries, letters, or journals, are physically and psychologically accessible for students, and as editors they would be obliged to keep in mind appropriateness of language, tone, and simplicity or complexity of ideas for a particular audience. Once students have located them, the worth of the raw materials may be determined by the subject's prominence, personality, point of view, or historical time frame. The materials for a college-level paper need not be extensive, but should be sufficient to comprise a reasonably self-contained unit. If the emphasis is on the person, there should be enough diary entries, letters, or narratives to reveal typical or fascinating dimensions of the subject's personality, feelings, roles, and relationships. If the emphasis is on events or information content, the materials should constitute a relatively complete narrative sequence that describes a phenomenon, occurrence, encounter, or process. A student editor must also determine whether the material is written well enough to warrant editing, and if it is self-contained, that is, understandable without added background information or identification of places, people, or relationships. The most worthwhile aspect of editing autobiographical materials is that the student editors will have done original work with primary materials of potential interest to others, which, if done well, may be publishable in local or regional newspapers and journals. (HTH)

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Re-Creating Creators: Teaching Students to Edit Autobiographical Materials

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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Editors of primary autobiographical materials are re-creators of the original author's mind, personality, experiences--life. In shaping and making public diaries, letters, or other personal narratives rescued from attics or archives, editors are introducing people and perspectives from a near or distant past to the present and the future. For students, the process of editing can transform what might have begun as a response to an academic exercise into a serious enterprise of real-life significance. Furthermore, in working intimately with others' writings, student editors can learn a great deal about how to write well, for good editors have to be good writers--sometimes, even better than their subjects.

Teaching writing students at all college levels to edit the autobiographical writings of others has many advantages which, if recognized, might encourage more instructors to make such assignments. Among the benefits which this essay will amplify are the following. Editing

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autobiographical materials enhances the editor's awareness and understanding of their intrinsic interest or significance. It also raises editorial recognition of their appropriateness in language, tone and simplicity or complexity of ideas presented to a particular audience, whether designated by the author or the editor. The editor learns to pick out a work's main points, and to highlight their importance through eliminating redundant and less significant material. If the documents were discovered in random order, perhaps in "some deep old desk or capacious hold-all,"[1] the editor is obliged to organize them so they make sense, either topically or chronologically--an exercise in close reading and careful thinking. The editor must identify and enhance the authorial voice or personality. The editor has to confront the technicalities, idiosyncrasies, and idioms of another's language, including its diction, spelling, and punctuation, and decide whether to impose a uniformity of style or to account for its inconsistencies. Moreover, through personal commentary the editor many function as a critic, interpreting the work for prospective readers by placing it in relevant personal, historical, intellectual, literary, social, or other contexts.

Teachers themselves often function as editors in dealing with students' writings; one of the major methods of helping people learn to write is to enhance their editorial finesse by showing them how to become their own self-critics.[2] Editorial functions are very important in the process of revising one's own writings, and often in the initial stages of writing, as well. Yet students are frequently too close to their own material to edit it competently. What they have written seems sacrosanct, even if an outside observer can see that it would benefit from pruning, reorganization, or other alterations.

Nevertheless, as class discussion of student papers often reveals, these very students can often read others' writings with sufficient objectivity to

make appropriate critical suggestions.[3] Having the same students function as editors of others' writings takes the process three crucial steps farther. (1) The students, with the teacher's guidance, have to make explicit the editorial principles they are using. (2) They have to apply these principles, consistently, to the writings of another in order to make them accessible to a designated audience. (3) As a consequence, the student editors should then be able to apply the same principles and considerations to their own subsequent writings.

Although some of the benefits of teaching students to edit pertain to the editing of materials of any sort, autobiographical writings offer particular advantages. Most importantly, unpublished, unedited autobiographical materials are accessible, physically and intellectually. As listeners, readers, and writers, students throughout their lifetimes have become familiar with letters, diaries, anecdotes, and other forms of personal narratives. As practitioners of the narrative art, when they tell or write stories, jokes, anecdotes, or incidents from their own lives, students know these personal modes intimately, even if they have never approached them analytically.

Unedited autobiographical materials are abundant, and easy to locate. Students may begin the quest for personal papers in their own desks, or with permission, in the strongboxes or attics of relatives or friends. Students can also look in the archives of their college libraries, or in their hometown historical societies. Most have collections of personal papers of local residents, famous or infamous, or of people of regional or national significance. Special collections, such as authors' papers or materials of physicians' and nurses' life histories can be full of fascinating information.[4]

Furthermore, autobiographical materials are intellectually and psychologically accessible to students who lack specialized knowledge or experience with research in primary materials, as do many freshmen who might

initially find editing totally new and foreign. People are people, ever subject to the seven deadly sins, the tantalizing triangle, the eternal verities. Once students have started to understand the historical contexts in which the documents are embedded, they can begin to explore the personalities, motives, and actions of their subjects--who will be understandable because they resemble other people the prospective editors know, or know about.

After students have located the raw material, obrained permission to use it and quote from it in case their papers should be published, and have deciphered the handwriting, they have to confront the editor's fundamental question: Is the material worth editing? This is determined by the answers to three corollary questions: Is the subject of intrinsic significance or interest? To whom? And, is the material well-written?

The worth of autobiographical materials may be determined according to several criteria. The subject may be of considerable significance: for instance, a prominent military, political or business leader; a noted contributor to the sciences or the arts; or the spouse, colleague, child, or lover of such a person. With a conspicuous subject even fairly innocuous material may be valuable because of its association, as is some of the published but repetitive correspondence of Presidents Washington, Adams, and Madison.[5] In the more likely event that the subject is unknown, or is familiar only to the student and a small number of intimates, other considerations apply. The materials may be worth editing because they may present a portrait or partial view of a memorable or colorful personality (the most unforgettable character. . .), and idiosyncratic intellect (the village inventor, or agnostic), an unusual--or thoroughly typical--life or point of view (the Willy and Linda Lomans of the world). Or they may warrant editorial attention because of the information conveyed by and through the subject's life. They may tell about a profession, trade, or skill, contemporary or vanished; participation in a way of life (as,

for instance, a resident of a small town) or an event of historical significance, whether common or cataclysmic (a survivor of the 1929 stock market crash, or a local disaster).

Above all, the autobiographical materials must interest the potential editor, whose job it will be to transmute the lifeless pieces of paper into a dynamic entity whose appeal is as evident to the outside readers as it is to the editor. For pedagogical purposes, the significance of the subject may reside in the judgment of the beholder, regardless of what others think. If a given subject or collection of autobiographical writings strikes the potential editor as dull or trivial, it's not worth pursuing. So students might appropriately look for autobiographical writings about people whose lives reflect their own interests or aspirations: student athletes could search for sportsmen and women, the politically-mined could look for governmental figures, descendants could seek their ancestors. Or students might be attracted to lives quite different from their own; the comfortably secure might examine slaves' or immigrants' papers; majorities could learn how minorities lived--and died.

For a paper under five pages a significant letter or two might suffice, but even for an undergraduate term paper the materials do not have to be extensive. They do, however, have to be sufficient to comprise a reasonably self-contained unit. If the emphasis is on the person, they should be enough diary entries, letters, or narrative to reveal typical or fascinating dimensions of the writer's personality, hopes or fears, role(s), relationships with others. Thus letters could show, as do many of the youthful Sylvia Plath's Letters Home,[6] the writer's professional aspirations and activities engaged in to fulfill these. Plath comments on her writing of poetry and short stories, exulting when they're accepted, and trying to be philosophical about rejection, as in this letter as a Smith College senior to her mother:

> The Journal sent my story back, saying that the narrative improved the writing, but it lacked an "indefinable something" that made a Journal piece. At present, I begin to feel that I lack that "indefinable something" that makes a winner.
>
> Fortunately, I'm happier in the midst of these refusals than I was two years ago on the crest of my success wave. Which just shows what a positive philosophy can do. I'd be scared if I just kept on winning things. I do deserve a streak of rejection . . . .
>
> Now I can see the advantage of an agent--she keeps you from the little deaths writer goes through whenever a manuscript comes back home . . . . (pp. 171-172)

Or autobiographical materials might present their author in one or more roles, real or imagined. Plath's other letters reveal a dutiful daughter, a life-of-the-party college girl, an achieving student.

If the emphasis is on events or informational content rather than on personality, the editor will look for autobiographical materials that constitute a relatively complete narrative sequence that describes a phenomenon, an occurrence, an encounter, or a process. Thus one short but self-contained segment of Mark Twain's Autobiography extols the joys of eating watermelon, especially those stolen from the fields:

> I know how a prize watermelon looks when it is sunning its fat rotundity among pumpkin vines and "simblins"; I know how to tell when it is ripe without "plugging" it. I know how inviting it looks when it is cooling itself in a tub of water under the bed, waiting; I know how it looks when it lies on the table in the sheltered great floor-space between house and kitchen, and the children gathered for the sacrifice and their mouths watering. I know the crackling sound it makes when the carving knife enters its end and I can see the split fly along in front of the blade as the knife cleaves its way to the other end; I can see its halves fall apart and display the rich red meat and the black seeds, and the heart standing up, a luxury fit for the elect. I know how a boy looks behind a yard-long slice of that melon and I know how he feels, for I have been there. I know the taste of the watermelon which has been honestly come by and I know the taste of the watermelon which has been acquired by art. Both taste good but the experienced know which tastes best.[7]

If, as is often the case, the autobiographical materials are too abundant to be quoted completely in a paper, part of the student editor's

task will be to determine what to include, what to omit--and why. In the process, the editor becomes the re-creator of the initial creation through his shaping of materials that may initially have been casually contrived or randomly assembled. The editor may choose to restrict the focus by picking out a unified, integrated segment from the totality, as one could do with Mark Twain's autobiographical account of watermelons. Or the editor may select portions of writing that represent the whole--enough short segments of her letters to reveal Sylvia Plath as daughter, student, wife, mother--and always a poet. In either instance, the editor will generally need to accurately represent the author's perspective and scale of values to avoid the distortion that could occur if segments were quoted out of context or truncated for purposes either procrustean or expedient. To make sure the excerpts are representative, the editor will need to have an overview of the entire text, though if the original is too long to read carefully (diaries and collections of letters, after all, can span a lifetime) it can simply be skimmed. Then the editor can choose segments to reflect the author's relative proportioning of events, issues, human relationships and concerns.

My own experience in editing the original typescript of Natalie Crouter's Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-45 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1980) is illustrative. As I skimmed the manuscript, at her request (for Natalie, like many diarists, wondered if her experience would interest others, and asked for my professional opinion), I realized that though fascinating, at 5000 pages it was much to long to expect readers to tolerate. In cutting it to ten per cent of its original length I tried to retain the diary's major themes: the importance of the prisoners' community organization, the nature and significance of family and everyday

life in confinement, American ingenuity and resourcefulness under privation, the unusual understanding and accommodation between Japanese guards and their American captives.[8]

The student editor also has to assess the diary's literary style. Is it written well enough to warrant editing? The significance of some materials would, of course, transcend the style - and eyewitness account of the Lincoln assassination, the discovery of the South Pole, or the first trans-Atlantic flight. These would be interesting for their sheer importance, though even here obtuseness of perception, neglect of detail, or dullness of description could blunt the impact. With less cataclysmic phenomena, the ways in which they are narrated assume even greater importance and prospective editors are justified in asking: Does the writer present a reasonably clear picture of the events narrated? With sufficient details to make them comprehensible to a reader unfamiliar with either the author or the circumstances? Is the language specific, colorful, evocative, or in other ways interesting? Does the autobiographical material in question present a distinctive authorial persona, point-of-view, and/or interpretive intelligence applied to the events or phenomena discussed? Has the author avoided loading the account with trivia, irrelevancies, or details of interest to no one but himself?

The prospective editor will need to consider the wholeness of the work, as well. Is the material self-contained, understandable without identifications of places, people, and relationships familial or otherwise? Or does it need explanations of references to events or information not contained in the text? Or amplifications of material elliptically presented? If the autobiographical materials require supplementary information, will the student editor know what to look for--and be able to find it?

A trial run in class helps students to learn to use these criteria. I distribute copies of excerpts from diaries or collections of letters, some published and some not (but typed so the readers won't be influenced by

either handwriting or print), and ask the class to determine whether they are worth editing--and reading. Below are excerpts from characteristic examples, both written by middle-aged American women thirty to forty years ago (that is all the students know beforehand), which invariably elicit pointed discussions of these criteria.

Example A:

> September 3, 1950. 12-eggs. A rainy day. Well I slept in got up at 11, dad got up. Hank & Don, they got the septic tank in, took down the tent I was just getting breakfast at noon when here come Mary her three little kids, Mrs. Macy Joe, I can't think of his last name, the to[wenan-handwriting difficult to read]picked 8 qts of rasberrys. Joe, picked ½ of bean's gave dad $2.00. Later Baker came a young couple with him, bought 4 quart Cream, Jennie baked a cake Sandy frosted it. I made two pies, Benjy Brown was here too, Jennie & Sam went fishing so they didn't get the ice cream. Jennie made a meat loaf it was good. Jennie gave me a Toni to-nite. We play Pinochal while Jennie was working on my hair, then Pottstown near 12, for hamburger's. Sandy went out this evening. It's most 1:45 guess I'll go to bed too.
>
> September 4, 1950. Labor Day
>
> 6-eggs a windy day. Well our last gang pulled out at 10-20. a.m. Oh it does seem kind of lonesome to-nite. Well dad & I went and picked a nice lot of black berries. I just canned 11 pts and 3 qts and we ate a qt. I am sure full. Well Halls stoped in about 4 stayed untill 7-30. Tom brought Amanda down then pulled out from here. We both took a 2½ hr nap this p.m., while listening to the Tiger & St. Louis game, they split a double header, I only got the kitchen sweep, and took a couple leaves out of the table. Oh did Sandy, Tina and Ken hate to leave. ever one say's my hair looks- nice. I think so too. John just went to bed. I'll take the last cans out of the cooker then to bed for me too, it's most 12.

Example B:

> December 8, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day in the Philippines
>
> After the children left for school in the garage car, we turned on the radio about 8:15--telling of the attack on Pearl Harbor. While listening, we heard planes and went out as usual to see them, standing in the middle of the stone steps up the bank leading to our house. Nida and Ismael, their two little girls, Nida's mother from Vigan, and Candida, the lavandera were all out with us. Almost over the house, quite high, came seventeen big bombers in formation. We could see them plainly and thought they were American planes. I remarked 'Well, we probably won't be standing

here looking up at planes like this much longer." As they passed almost opposite the hourse, we heard a long ripping sound like the tearing of a giant sheet and saw an enormous burst of smoke and earth near officers' quarters at Camp John Hay--the first bombing of the Philippines before our eyes. Huge billows of smoke and dust covered the Post as we looked. No one said a word. We turned to each othr, speechless. At last Jerry said, hoarsely, "My God, they've bombed Camp John Hay. Those are Japanese planes." The smoke rolled up and the smell of powder reached us. We could hear screaming and men yelling orders. We had a front row view of the bomb strike without being too near to be damaged. Suddenly we all ran into the house. The planes passed out of sight over the mines and mountain ridge.

Later we learned that Mrs. Dudley out walking before breakfast with Butch had shrapnel in one eye and her leg so badly mangled that it had to be amputated. Little Butch's leg was broken and torn.

Our knees were shaky. We kept staring at each other, wondering if we could believe what our eyes had seen. Had war really come at last? Nida's mother developed a terrific headache which made me anxious about her. Jerry had to go down to the office so I went along with the finished garments for the Red Cross. We told Nida to take all the family into the stone ditch and to lay flat there if any more planes came. I showed her how to pack the Celadon dishes in between pillows and stacked my files and Indusco books together.

As we drove to town, we could see that no one know what had happened. On Session Road everyone was strolling casually, looking into windows, going in and out of stores. Japanese store keepers stood unconcerned in doorways. We had no answer from dialing the Post and did not go over. We met Betty Lee pushing her son in his carriage down in market square. She smiled as we stopped to speak, saying, "You don't need to tell me, I heard the news about Hawaii." I said, "You'd better take the baby home at once. Those were Japanese planes. We saw them bomb the Post." She uttered a "My God" and turned, running, toward home.

We still couldn't realize it and didn't full take it in for an hour. Everything seemed so quite and peaceful. I kept saying, "You don't suppose we are mistaken--we'd better not tell people till we know more--it's a bad rumor to start." Jerry stormed that he knew a bombing when he saw it and that was that.[9]

These examples are so different in quality that they should be easy to analyze--but not without debate over editorial principles and practices. The author of example A, let's call her "Mary," a farmer's wife, focuses on the minutiae of everyday life--the gathering of eggs, the picking of berries and beans, the making of pies and cakes, the casual entertaining

of guests--or are they relatives? Throught the interpretation of a perceptive writer, such events could be fascinating indeed--but are they in this context?

Most prospective student editors who have examined Mary's diary think not. They find the sparse narrative flat: "Hank & Don, they got the septic tank in." What is the significance of this? Does it mark a transition from outdoor to indoor plumbing? Did the installation take much work? Money? Students find the absence of detail boring and incomplete: "Sandy went out this evening." Where? With whom? To do what? Did she have a good time? What does the writer think of it? And student readers find the lack of identification or characterization of people mystifying and frustrating: Who are Jennie and Sam? What are their personalities like? Have they other notable features? What is their relationship to each other? To the author? And what of Tom and Amanda? And Sandy, Tina, and Ken? Although the identities of these people might become clearer as the diary entries multiply, if they continue to behave as stick figures, even the accretion of events in which they participate will not make them three-dimensional. If there are fascinating life-stories, intrigues, complex motivations, they remain so submerged beneath the tranquil flow of graceless, unreflective prose as to create not even a ripple on the surface of the oblivious writer's mind. Mary's authorial eye does not look for drama and does not find it.

Some students claim that this record is valuable because of the account it offers of a presumably typical way of farm life in the 1950s. Such slices of life are indeed useful--as evidence for sociological generalizations or historical interpretations of an era or occupation. However, Mary's account would be inappropriate for students to try to edit because, apart from its mundane style, it is too elliptical; she does not provide enough context for students to easily or accurately

find information to supplement what is omitted.

This entry raises additional questions. Should student editors try to correct inaccurate spelling and punctuation? Generally not. These manifestations of the author's characteristic expression offer clues about her level of education and cast of mind; to alter them would be to falsify the writer's accidentally-expressed but nevertheless very real persona. Should student editors supply details to try to flesh out the skeletons? For the same reasons, such supplementary information--if it could be found--would not belong in the text itself, though it might constitute a preface or footnotes. As a general editorial principle, the editor cannot change the actual language of the text unless there is an obvious typographical error; errors of fact can be corrected in the text through inserting the correction in square brackets or in footnotes:

Either: "Jennie gave me a Toni [a popular brand of home permanent] tonite" or "Jennie gave me a Toni[1] tonite".

[1]A popular brand of home permanent.

Such bracketed insertions and footnotes are assumed to be the editor's unless otherwise indicated.

In one important respect, editorial practices may diverge from the conventions that govern scholarly quotation. Ordinarily, editors indicate omissions with ellipses. . . . However, if the editor has greatly reduced the bulk of the text through numerous excisions, continual ellipses . . . would be . . . very disruptive . . . They might do . . . the author. . . a considerable. . . disservice by making her . . . appear. . . . to speak. . . .with a continual stutter. In such cases, sparing ellipses, if any at all, would give a truer sense of the author's style; a footnote could indicate the rationale for this practice, as well as the quantity and substance of the text omitted.

Example B, Natalie's account of Pearl Harbor Day in the Philippines, raises other editorial considerations. It is, prospective student editors agree, an exciting narrative about an historically important subject. The perspective is unusual--an eyewitness account by a civilian woman, not of the bombing of Pearl Harbor but of a bombing in the Philippines carried out at the same time. Natalie writes simply but well. She depicts the scene vividly, with odors and sounds ("the smell of powder reached us. We could hear screaming and men yelling orders."), action, tempo, mood, and place ("On Session Road everyone was strolling casually, looking into windows . . . . Japanese store keepers stood unconcerned in doorways"). Through the same details she established the dramatic contrast of the devastation, juxtaposed with the peaceful unconcern of the marketplace--an innocence ironically underscored by the events of the next four years, and by the readers' knowledge of what is to happen.

In appealing contrast to Mary's simple, declarative statements, Natalie's sentences are varied in construction, length, and mode. She intermingles sentences long and short, simple and complex, declarative and interrogative. Natalie's dialogue sounds as if it were actually being spoken; she has an accurate ear for the rhythm and vocabulary of American idiom: "'My God, they've bombed Camp John Hay. Those are Japanese planes.'"

However, Natalie's very facility and the intrinsic interest of her narrative present for prospective editors problems of a different sort than Mary's. With such a well-written, well-developed account, what is left for an editor to do?

The editor's task here consists, in part, of explaining through an introductory essay or footnotes (or both) events, phenomena, and words to contemporary readers, presumably Americans who know little about either the Philippines or World War II. Assuming that the narrative begins with the beginning of the war, an introduction would be helpful in identifying

the main characters--who they are, why (since they appear to be Americans) they are in the Philippines even at a time when they obviously suspect that a war is coming; why else would Natalie have said "'Well, we probably won't be standing here looking up at planes [which she thought were American] like this much longer'"? Given the abundance of description and detail that Natalie provides in this entry and throughout the wartime diary, the readers can count on the development of characters and the unfolding of human relationships as the narrative proceeds, just as they do in novels. So these do not require extensive clarification at the outset, though after the whole manuscript has been read (and presumably, excerpted, since Natalie's story promises to be a long one) the editor may want to identify people who appear only fleetingly--if that is possible from either hisitroical historical sources or informtion elsewhere in the diary itself. Also, in the introduction or an early footnote, the editor will need to indicate the rationale for the editorial principles employed: what material (and what percentage) of the original has been retained, and why; how typical or atypical it is; how much was cut, and why; whether any other changes have been made in the text and if so, what they are (have profane words been bowdlerized? initials been supplemented by whole names?).

Some background information about the Philippines is also necessary for the understanding of Natalie's diary, and this too, can be supplied in either an introduction or footnotes or both. Why was an American Air Force base, Camp John Hay, located there? A military history of World War II might tell.[10] Why does Natalie identify "Pearl Harbor Day in the Philippines" as December 8, when it was December 7 in the United States? A quest for the answer will turn up some information about the International Date Line. On which of the Islands is Camp John Hay? Vigan? Baguio (which a continuation of the text specifies as the town in which

Natalie and Jerry live, and where they go shopping on Session Road)? A map of the Philippine Islands can provide the answer--which the editor may wish to supply either in a footnote or in a map of his/her own. What is a lavendera? A Spanish dictionary can answer that--but how can the student tell whether to try Spanish, the language transplanted by the Philippine governors who preceded the Americans, or one of the Philippine tribal languages? Lavendera "sounds like Spanish" is a good enough answer for a start; the other principle of information-seeking is to look in the most obvious or most likely source first. Why did Natalie employ a lavendera (a laundress) and other servants? Was she rich? Or did most Americans in the Philippines do the same, whether or not they could have afforded such servants in the United States? This information could be supplied by a corollary source, someone who has lived in or visited the Philippines.

Some other unfamiliar terms require identification, which footnotes can provide. A good rule of thumb would be to consult three or four likely sources, starting with standard dictionaries and encyclopedias, and then to abandon the search unless a likely lead turns up in one of them. It is unreasonable to expect a student editor to pursue an extended quest that would require an expert's sophistication to accomplish, when even the pursuit would require an unwarranted amount of time and effort.

The autobiographical materials a student edits may be incomplete. They may present either a partial portrait, or a single phenomenon or aspect of the subject's life. They may show a beginning or intermediary stage in a continuing process. In such cases, the editor may wish to write a brief Afterword to follow through on the text. What were the ultimate consequences of events begun or explored in the text? How did

the subject live the rest of her life? Did her personality, public standing, or economic situation remain constant? Or change in significant ways--for better or worse? With what effects? Such questions can be answered if the student knows the subject personally or has access to other information to supplement the text at hand. In these cases, the editor's additions will, in combination with his textual editing, help to re-create the creator of the original writing. If the text itself is the only surviving remnant of its author, then whether to supplement it becomes again a matter of student (or perhaps teacher) choice of how much effort is appropriate to expend on solving the not-so-sweet mysteries of another's life.

Ultimately, the most worthwhile aspect of editing autobiographical materials is that the student editors will have done original work with primary materials of potential interest to others. If these have been selected wisely and edited well, they may be publishable. Narratives about people of local concern can be submitted to campus, community, or regional newspapers or journals; personal accounts of major events or nationally known people can be sent to publications with a wider circulation. Thus through re-creating another's life, the student editor can endeavor to bring this creation into the lives of others, with a reasonable likelihood of success, given the large number of publications that print such materials. Editors—and teachers of editors--collaborate meaningfully in this serious yet pleasurable enterprise of real life. In re-creating creators, they become creators themselves.

Notes

[1]Virginia Woolf, A Writer's Diary (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), p. 13.

[2]Lynn Z. Bloom and Martin Bloom, "Becoming an Effective Self-Critic," Journal of English Teaching Techniques (Fall, 1968), pp. 6-7.

[3]See Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), passim.

[4]For instance, notable collections of the lives of doctors, nurses, medical missionaries, and medical researchers are available at the National Medical Library, Bethesda, Maryland; growing numbers of women's diaries and other autobiographical materials are in the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe; and an extensive collection of E.B. White's letters and papers is at Cornell, his alma mater. Good places to start looking for personal materials are repositories near where the person in question lived, worked, or was educated. Such documents are usually readily available to users who can examine them on the scene. Although copies can usually be ordered by mail, to do so requires advance knowledge of the collection and too much time to make a short term project feasible at long distance.

[5]See, for instance, John Adams, The Papers of John Adams, eds.

Robert J. Taylor, Mary-Jo Kline, and Gregg L. Lint (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977-): James Madison, Papers, ed. William T. Hutchinson and William M.E. Rachal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962-); and George Washington, The Diaries of George Washington, eds. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1976-).

[5]Sylvia Plath, Letters Home: Correspondence 1950-63, ed. Aurelia Schober Plath (1975; rpt. New York: Bantam, 1977). A single letter of the type from which this is an excerpt would be excellent material for a short editorial paper, for it would allow the editor to provide commentary that would identify its significance in relation to the writer's career, aspirations, temperament, and relationship with her mother, for example.

[7]The Autobiography of Mark Twain, Including Chapters Now Published for the First Time, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 13. Or, this passage, if deemed too short, could be examined in the context in which it occurs, a self-contained section of seven paragraphs which begins, "As I have said, I spent some part of every year at the farm until I was twelve or thirteen years old. The life which I led there with my cousins was full of charm and so is the memory of it yet" (p. 12). Forty-five "memory" phrases, "I can call back," "I can see," "I know," "I can feel again," "I remember," help to integrate and distinguish this section stylistically.

[8]So greatly did the internees and one Japanese commandant, Rokuro

Tomibe, esteem one another that in 1976 one hundred former internees and their families held a thirty-year reunion in San Francisco. Tomibe, the guest of honor, delivered an emotion-laden speech and presented each of his former prisoners with a commemorative medal.

[9]This is from the original manuscript of Natalie Crouter's Forbidden Diary, and is reproduced in its entirety in the edited and published version on pp. 26-27.

[10]Good general sources are R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, The Encyclopedia of Military History (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), and Sir Basil Liddell Hart, History of the Second World War (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1971). More specialized sources include such books as The Army Air Forces in World War II, ed. Wesley F. Craven and James L. Cate (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948-58), and M. Hamlin Canon, Leyte. The Return to the Philippines (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954).